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ABSTRACT

A study examined the production of three speech acts by a small group of Korean learners of English at a high beginning level. In comparing disagreements, requests, and suggestions, it was found that although the students demonstrate the ability to increase the level of politeness used, their disagreements tended to be direct and unmitigated. It is suggested that status, and in particular age as a component of status, is an important factor in influencing the students' choices regarding the perceived level of appropriate politeness. Transcriptions of the speech acts studied are appended. (MSE)

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Politeness in the Speech of Korean ESL Learners

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This paper makes a contribution to the field of second language pragmatics by examining the production of three speech acts by a group of high beginning Korean learners of English. In comparing disagreements to requests and suggestions, it was found that, although the students demonstrated the ability to increase the level of politeness, their disagreements tended to be direct and unmitigated. It is suggested that status, and in particular age as a component of status, is an important factor in influencing the students' choices regarding the perceived level of appropriate politeness to use.

Introduction

The purpose of the present research is to contribute to the study of the development of pragmatic competence in ESL learners by attempting to discern patterns in the speech act production of a group of high beginning Korean ESL students. Specifically, the learners' strategies for producing the speech act of disagreement will be compared to those they use when requesting and giving advice/suggestions, three face threatening acts. While the learners in this study exhibited direct, bald on-record disagreements, the force of which were frequently intensified through, for example, the use of repetition or a loud voice, their behavior in giving advice/suggestions and in making requests revealed a high degree of linguistic sophistication and the ability to call upon at least a limited number of strategies to increase the level of politeness of the act.

I will present evidence that sensitivity to status, which in the case of Koreans includes a particular emphasis on age differences, is likely to be the major explanatory factor for the difference in strategies. In this paper I wish to provide a preliminary description of high beginning Korean ESL students' speech act behavior that may be used as a basis for further study and comparison. In addition, it is hoped that the insights provided here will be of use to teachers of ESL in understanding their L1 Korean students' language behavior and in targeting specific cultural differences in the use of certain politeness strategies that may need to be addressed in the

interests of raising the students' awareness of the differences in pragmatic norms between English and Korean.

Background

My initial impression of the students' expressions of disagreement as being more direct and forceful than the American native English speaker's norm[1] was confirmed by previous research into disagreement by Americans. Using both samples of naturally occurring speech, as well as data collected by a discourse completion test, Beebe and Takahashi (1989: 203) found that regardless of status differences Americans tend to disagree rather indirectly, by prefacing the face-threatening statement with an expression implying agreement. This is what Brown and Levinson (1987: 114) term "token agreement," for example, "Yes, but...". In addition, Beebe and Takahashi (1989: 205) found that, again, regardless of status differences, Americans tend to soften the force of disagreement with positive remarks which they try to personalize for the hearer, rather than by employing formulaic positive statements. García (1989: 306) also found that Americans sought to avoid conflict when disagreeing, employing predominately what she terms, "nonconfrontational" devices and "impersonal" devices.

In contrast to the American tendency towards indirect and nonconfrontational expressions of disagreement, in an examination of argument strategies in Korean native speakers' conversational discourse, Song (1994: 4078) found both direct and indirect expressions of disagreement. Three multifunctional strategies (repetition, questioning, and code-switching), and four non-confrontational strategies (disagreeing playfully, giving opinions, relating personal experiences, and remaining silent), were found. The most direct type of argument expression was found to be "formulaic bald-on-record oppositional expressions." Less direct expressions were hedges, and the most mitigated expression of disagreement was silence. Given these differing cultural preferences for ways of showing disagreement, variation from the American norm is to be expected in the realization of the speech act of disagreement by Korean learners. However, differences exist, both across the learners' speech acts and in comparison to the American norm, which remain to be explained.

Research Questions, Design, and Methodology

This study involved two major research questions: What strategies and patterns of politeness can be found among high beginning level Korean ESL students? Why were the learners' acts of disagreement expressed in

[1] In this paper the term "American" can be understood as referring to North American, or more specifically, the United States.

such a bald, unmitigated manner, particularly in comparison to their performance of two other face-threatening acts, giving advice/suggestions and making requests? I hypothesized that the perception of status, and age as it related to perceived status among Koreans, would play an important role in determining what politeness strategy, if any, was to be used.

This research took place in the context of a voluntary grammar elective class in a university ESL program. The course was called "Beginning Grammar" and was open to enrollment for students from levels one and two in this program's system of six levels. Most of the students enrolled at the time of this study were from level two and could be classified as "high beginning" within the system. The class consisted of 11 students, a core of seven or eight of which attended regularly. The students were predominately male, Korean, and in their mid-twenties. Of the female students, two were Korean, one Italian, one Brazilian, and one, who was in her mid-forties, was Peruvian. They had been living in the U.S. an average of four months, a figure that excludes the Peruvian woman, who had lived in the U.S. for about 10 years.

Relationships between most of the students were comfortable. Many of them were enrolled in the majority of their courses together and also interacted socially outside of class. As their teacher, in addition to being the researcher, I was able to observe these relationships and judge the social distance between the various students.

The class met twice weekly for one hour over a period of 10 weeks. For eight of these weeks data were collected through audio or video taping of each class meeting. Taping usually began before students arrived and continued until the last student had left. In this way, I collected interaction that occurred outside of the context of the lessons, as well as that which occurred during class time. Lessons usually involved a warm-up activity in which a specific grammar point was presented implicitly, explicit presentation of the grammar point, and finally a practice exercise. This final activity was less structured than the previous two, and provided students with an opportunity for open discussion. Tapes were transcribed as soon as possible after the class in order to capture the full context in which each speech act occurred. The final corpus to be analyzed here consisted of 29 speech acts: five requests, six suggestions, and 18 disagreements.

The main framework used to analyze the data was Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness. They define "face" as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (1987: 61). The notion of face is made up of two facets: positive face, or the desire to be liked and approved of; and negative face, or the desire to act without imposition by others. A face-threatening act is one that causes threat to any aspect of another's face.

When speakers choose to perform a face-threatening act (FTA), there are a number of different ways they can go about it. First, they may choose to do the act off record, in which case their intentions may be ambiguous.

For example, the comment, "Gee, that coffee smells great," could be a simple observation or a request for a cup of coffee. Speakers may also choose to do FTA's on record. In this case, they may choose to speak baldly and without redress, or to employ some sort of redressive action. A bald on-record FTA will (to most hearers) be clear and direct, although these qualities carry with them the risk of being impolite. Done on record but with redressive action, a FTA "attempts to counteract the potential face damage" (1987: 69), showing that the threat was not intended. The theory divides redressive action into two types: positive politeness strategies and negative politeness strategies. The former demonstrate regard for the hearer's positive-face needs by showing that the speaker approves of the hearer. The latter address the hearer's negative-face needs by showing deference and by allowing the hearer a way to avoid imposition. Within this framework, the positive face threatening act of disagreement, and the negative face threatening acts of requesting and advising/suggesting were classified by the specific type of each strategy that was employed, for example, the positive politeness strategy of "joking," or the off record strategy of "being vague."

Results and Discussion

In this section I will first present a general analysis of the politeness strategies that were found within the data as a whole. Next, I will examine the strategies that were employed by the students when requesting, advising/suggesting, and finally in disagreeing, and will also include in each section comments as to the linguistic well-formedness of the speech acts. As aggravating and mitigating moves occurred only in the disagreement corpus, these will be discussed in the section on disagreement. Finally, I will compare the disagreement data with the requesting and advising/suggesting data in an attempt to understand the learners' strategy choices.

Overall use of politeness strategies

A fairly limited range of strategies occurred in these data. Of Brown and Levinson's 15 strategies of positive politeness, two were found in the data examined here. Five of their 10 strategies of negative politeness were used, and two of their 15 strategies for committing a speech act off record were represented. The strategies in each category are presented below. The first number represents a raw count of how many times each strategy occurred. The second, in parentheses, provides information as to what percentage of all strategies the raw number represents. Totals for each type of strategy are also provided:

Interestingly, very few (9.37%) positive politeness strategies were employed, despite the fact that over half the corpus (18 of 28 speech acts) consisted of disagreement, an act which threatens the hearer's positive face and would therefore be expected to elicit positive politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson 1987: 101). Pragmatic transfer from Korean may be

Table 1. Politeness Strategies

Bald on record strategy	13	39.39%
Positive politeness strategies:		
Joke	2	6.25%
Give (or ask for) reasons	1	3.13%
Total	3	9.09%
Negative politeness strategies:		
Be conventionally indirect	11	73.33%
Question, hedge	3	20%
Apologize	1	6.67%
Total	15	45.45%
Off record strategies:		
Be vague	1	3.13%
Displace H	1	3.13%
Total	2	6.06%

the most likely explanation for this phenomenon. Hwang (1990) outlines a number of important politeness markers in Korean and notes that most involve negative politeness. Indirect speech, he says, is one of the most common means of conveying politeness. For example, requests might be presented as questions, as is often done in English by employing the modal "can." Hedges, such as *kkway* 'pretty much' and *malhacamyen* 'so to speak,' are common negative politeness markers (1990: 50). Hwang attributes this preponderance of negative politeness strategies to the traditional inclination towards "reservedness" as a marker of politeness in Korea (1990: 52). It seems plausible that at this early stage in their pragmatic development these learners were relying heavily on the norms of their native language and thus transferring the Korean preference for negative politeness strategies into their English speech.

In addition to the apparent preference for negative politeness strategies, the high occurrence of the bald on record strategy should be noted, as well as the fact that all but one of these involved disagreement. A linguistic comparison with disagreements in Korean may reveal pragmatic transfer in this case, as well. Song's (1994) analysis of Korean argument strategies revealed, as discussed above, the use of "formulaic bald on-record oppositional expressions" (1994: 4078). Perhaps these learners were equating the bald on record strategies they employed with their formulaic equivalents in Korean.

Requests

The requests collected were those that involved an attempt on the part of the speaker to influence the behavior of the addressee. Requests for in-

formation were excluded. All of the requests were linguistically well-formed and even somewhat sophisticated, for example, correctly drawing upon the modals "can" and "could." Table 2 below shows the politeness strategies used by the learners in making requests.

Table 2. Request Strategies

Request Strategies	Number	Percentage
Negative politeness	4	80%
Bald on record	1	20%
Positive politeness	0	0%
Off record	0	0%
Totals	5	100.00%

In this case, learners appropriately employed negative politeness strategies to realize their requests. Only one bald on record request occurred, and this was between two students with minimal social distance between them in the casual context of a party on the last day of class. Of the requests that used negative politeness strategies, three were directed to the teacher and one to a fellow student, a good friend of the speaker. Conventional indirectness was the only strategy employed in each case. Although the number of requests is small, the students do show a tendency to be more polite when addressing someone they perceive to be of higher status, that is, the teacher, by being conventionally indirect in their requests.

Advice/Suggestions

Nearly all of the six suggestions were linguistically well-formed. While some errors occurred, they were usually very minor, for example, the use of the bare form of the verb where the infinitive should have been used. Overall, the students' advice was grammatically correct, and even linguistically sophisticated, demonstrating correct use of the conditional, negative question formation, and the modal "should," among other similarly complex grammatical features.

Each of the six instances of advising/suggesting involves a student addressing the teacher, and here the Korean students' tendency to increase the level of politeness according to the perceived status of the addressee is seen again. Table 3 provides information as to the major strategies employed.

First, the students appropriately employ negative politeness strategies for the majority of their suggestions (66.67%). Conventional indirectness was again used most frequently, in three of the four instances of negative politeness, and once in conjunction with the hedging strategy, which occurred twice in this portion of the data. The single example of positive

Table 3. Advice/Suggestion Strategies

	Number	Percentage
Negative politeness	4	66.67%
Positive politeness	1	16.67%
Off record	1	16.67%
Bald on record	0	0.00%
Totals	6	100.00%

politeness for giving advice involved the use of the joking strategy.

Finally, this portion of the corpus contains the only instance of off record politeness, seen in the example below. In this exchange, which occurred at the end of one class, the student advises the teacher on caring for her sore throat:

Hong: In- in our country if I hurt my- my egg er throat
T: yeah
Hong: they- they say to me "you should eat some egg without cook"
T: Ew! Raw egg?

The student called upon two off record strategies (vagueness and displacing H) in order to advise the teacher that eating a raw egg would help her sore throat. His perceived status of the addressee may have played an important role in the student's choice of strategies, however, this alone seems unlikely to be able to account for this extreme politeness. More likely, perhaps, is that the student recognized the reaction that many Americans might have to eating raw eggs, (indeed, his suggestion was met with such a reaction), or that due to the culturally specific nature of his advice, it might be better not to press the issue.

Disagreement

Again, the disagreements in this corpus are, for the most part, linguistically well-formed. In disagreeing, the students often employed devices that were linguistically simple. For example, disagreement often simply involved a contradictory statement: "I don't think so" or "Honey is not good." The bare negative exclamation "no" also occurred frequently. In several cases it was followed by presentation of an opinion or explanation, which often contained lexical or grammatical errors, however the core of the speech act was almost always well-formed. The majority of the disagreements found in this data were performed baldly and without redress. Table 4 shows the strategies used.

As disagreement is an act that threatens the addressee's positive face,

Table 4. Disagreement Strategies

Disagreement Strategies	Number	Percentage
Bald on record	12	66.66%
Negative politeness	4	22.22%
Positive politeness	1	5.56%
Negative and positive	1	5.56%
Off record	0	0.00%
Totals	18	100.00%

according to Brown and Levinson (1987), we would expect to see positive politeness strategies being employed as a means of softening the force of the disagreement. However, positive politeness only occurs overtly (see discussion below) in two cases. In one of those two, positive strategies (joking and asking for reasons) are found in conjunction with the negative politeness strategy of conventional indirectness. The lesson has been about "too many/much" and a Korean student gives the example that there are too many Korean students in the class, implying that this tends to lead to less English and more Korean being spoken. The teacher agrees and a short exchange follows about the difficulties the class has often had in forming groups of students that come from different language backgrounds. Byung, however, enters this discussion to disagree with the notion of "too many Korean students" with a sly joke:

> Byung: But "too" I learned "too" I learned you from you "too" mean so bad
> (Unidentified male student laughs)
> T: Oh, yes, that "too" means bad.
> Byung: You said "too many Koreans here..."

(T. goes into an explanation intended to reassure that the makeup of the class is difficult, not the students themselves. T gets a sly look and laugh from the student at the end of her explanation, showing that he has been teasing her).

In the sole instance in which positive politeness is used alone, the joking strategy was chosen. This exchange took place just after the teacher has been given advice to eat a raw egg to soothe her sore throat, as seen in the earlier example. In response to her squeamish reaction ("Ew!"), Byung uses teasing to refute her impression:

> Byung: IT'S NOT DISGUSTING!
> T: IT IS DISGUSTING!
> Byung: IT'S NOT DISGUSTING!
> T: IT IS DISGUSTING!
> Byung: IT'S NOT DISGUSTING!

T: I'm not gonna eat raw egg. I will not eat raw egg.
Byung: You'd better eat that!
T: NO!
Byung: (laughs)

Although his words are forceful, his loud voice, exaggeratedly bossy intonation, and laughter at the end all work together to create a joking strategy.

In examining the negative politeness strategies used in the students' disagreements, as well as the bald on record disagreements, I found Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper's (1989) notion of mitigating and aggravating supportive moves helpful. The former serve to decrease the force of the act. For example, the bare command "Give me your pen," can be made to sound less confrontational if the speaker hesitates when uttering it or prefaces the statement with "please." Aggravating moves, on the other hand, increase the force of an act. For example, the command "Give me your pen" can be made more forceful if the speaker shouts.

When negative politeness occurred alone, in two cases conventional indirectness was the only strategy called upon, and in one instance, questioning was used alone. The figures concerning negative politeness may be slightly deceptive, however, as in the case of the student who used the questioning strategy. The possible effects of this strategy are likely to have been canceled out by his also employing two aggravating moves, repetition and suprasegmentals. In this case, Dae, a Korean man who has never been to Italy but has a friend living there, disagrees with the assertion of Etta, an Italian woman, that men in Italy are very rude to women. The two students know each other well as a result of having several of their classes together; however, Etta does not like Dae.

Etta: Yeah, yeah, my mother was u:::m ( ) sometimes I see two couple like my mother my father um the man is very rude sometimes.
Dae: Rude? Very very RUDE? Very RUDE?
Etta: eah, rude.

The final case of negative politeness involved the most extreme measures to ensure politeness that were found in all of the 18 disagreements. This student not only chose two negative politeness strategies, conventional indirectness and apologizing, but also employed the only mitigating move in the entire corpus, hesitation, to soften her disagreement. In the following transcript, the students have been discussing how the lives of women have changed. Jin, a Korean woman and Song, a Korean man, are in disagreement as to how much leisure women have. The two students are on friendly terms and have most of their classes together, but Jin is younger than Song:

Song: Uh I thinks today is very different, woman's life for ex ample- housewife and uh about two- twenty uh twenty years ago woman, her- hers life is very hard and uh today's woman wake up and enjoy uh swimming and and and soccer ((ss laugh)) and and- Huh? Uh, why? Why- why you laughing?
Ana: enjoy work out, no?
Song: Yes, yes, yeah.
Jin: Just- just- excuse me, just um her husband um many money uh much money.

Perhaps significantly, this is only one of two instances involving Korean women expressing disagreement. While the size of the corpus and the small number of Korean females in the class prevents any more than speculation as to the role of gender in politeness expressions among Korean ESL learners, this could prove a fruitful area for future research.

We turn now to an examination of the bald on record strategy that comprised not only the largest proportion of all strategies used in disagreeing (66.67%), but a considerable amount of the strategies employed across the speech acts under examination (39.39%). Not only does it seem surprising to find such a large proportion of bald on record disagreements given the face-threatening nature of the act, but perhaps more puzzling is the fact that 9 of the 12 (75%) contained one or more aggravating moves that increased the force of an already direct expression of a positive face threatening act. In addition, one-third of those nine acts of disagreement contained two aggravating moves.

In Table 5 (below) are the raw numbers and percentages of the various aggravating moves which were found in the data. Two of Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper's (1989) aggravating moves were present in the data

Table 5. Aggravating Moves

	Number	Percentage
Suprasegmentals	5	33.33%
Opinion/Explanation	5	33.33%
Repetition	3	20.00%
Exclamatory Phrase	1	6.67%
Interruption	1	6.67%
Totals	15	100.00%

examined: repetition and suprasegmentals. Repetition as an aggravating move included repeating the actual negator, (e.g.; No, no, no), or repeating some less direct form of disagreement expression (e.g.; Very very RUDE? Very RUDE?). Suprasegmentals, in each case, involved the use of a louder,

more forceful voice. Three additional types of aggravating moves, not found in their framework, emerged in my data: 1.) Explanations, 2.) Exclamatory phrases, and 3.) Interruptions. Opinions/Explanations that followed a bare statement of disagreement (No) were considered to be aggravating moves as in no case did they appear to be an attempt to soften or even neutralize the disagreement, but rather to act as a means of strengthening the argument and adding force to the disagreement (e.g.; No. I don't think so). An exclamatory phrase (Oh my God!) was, in one case, used to express a stronger feeling than could be conveyed with a simple negation. Finally, interruption was considered to be a deliberate aggravating move in one case.

The relatively low proficiency of these learners can not account for the preponderance of the bald on record strategy, as they displayed throughout the data both adequate linguistic means of expressing themselves, as well as control of at least a limited variety of politeness strategies. One possible explanation might be that the speech act of disagreement is acquired later than the acts of giving advice and requesting. Also, some of the learners' control of, for example, modal use in these speech acts may be due to the explicit instruction that often accompanies the teaching of these forms in ESL/EFL classrooms. Modals as used for requesting are often explicitly presented on a continuum from less polite (e.g.; Can I...?) to more polite (e.g.; Could I...?). This explanation however, can not account for the use of aggravating moves, which were found to accompany 75% of all bald on record disagreements. It is one thing if learners lack the linguistic proficiency to express disagreement in a more elaborated manner than with a simple "no," and quite another for them to shout this expression.

An examination of the data according to age and status reveals a more plausible explanation. First, of the 18 expressions of disagreement, only four (22.22%) were directed to the teacher and of these four, three (75%) were on record with redressive action. While it is possible that the students were in more or less continual agreement with the teacher, a more realistic analysis of the situation might attribute this small proportion of teacher-directed disagreements to two of Brown and Levinson's (1987: 112-113) strategies for positive politeness: seek agreement and avoid disagreement. In addition, this might be explained as transfer of what Hwang (1990:52) referred to as the traditional Korean tendency towards "reservedness" as a means of politeness.

While the request and advice/suggestion data only contain two such speech acts directed towards other students and therefore allow for little comparison across the status levels, the data show that the students are sensitive to perceived status differences (see Table 6), clearly tending to choose politeness markers when speaking to the teacher. Their demonstration of this ability to alter the level of politeness according to their interlocutor strengthens the argument that the students were actually employing the strategies of disagreement avoidance and seeking agreement when they may not have agreed with the teacher, but perhaps felt it disrespectful

Table 6. Request & Advice/Suggestion Strategies by Status

	Student to teacher		Student to student	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Bald on record	0	0%	1	50%
Negative politeness	7	77.78%	1	50%
Positive politeness	1	11.11%	0	0%
Off record	1	11.11%	0	0%
Totals	9	100%	2	100%

to disagree directly with her. Interviews with students or perhaps a careful videotape analysis of their nonverbal behavior, particularly with the help of a Korean informant, would reveal these means of expressing disagreement. Perhaps also present in these data, but unnoticed, were instances of silence used as disagreement, as found by Song (1994), who described this as the most mitigated method of disagreeing in Korean.

In Korean society, age is among the important determinants of status. Hwang (1990) posits that an age difference of as little as three years can initiate the use of different honorifics. My Korean informants specify that in many cases even an age difference of six months to one year will elicit not only different honorifics, but more importantly here, different forms and strategies of politeness. They stress that in most cases interlocutors must be very close in age and also have very little social distance between them in order to ignore the linguistic means of marking various levels of politeness. By analyzing the instances of student-student disagreement by age difference, further insights into the importance of status, and particularly age as an important component in the perception of status, can be revealed even though the students were all in their early to mid-twenties.

As Table 7 shows, age is an important factor in determining whether or not politeness formulas should be used. Not only did older students tend to express more disagreement with the younger students, but they also

Table 7. Disagreement Strategies by Age

	Older to younger		Younger to older	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Bald on record	10	90.91%	2	28.57%
Negative politeness	1	9.09%	3	42.86%
Positive politeness	0	0%	1	14.29%
Negative and positive	0	0%	1	14.29%
Totals	11	100%	7	100%

employed the bald on record strategy in the vast majority of their disagreements with younger students (90.91%), leaving only one instance (9.09%)

of disagreement with redressive action. The younger students were apparently not quite as free to disagree with their elders, and while the distribution of strategies used by younger students when addressing older students was more equal than that of the older students, only 28.57% of the younger students' expressions of disagreement were bald on record. Younger students chose to use some from of redressive action or to go off record in 71.44% of their disagreements with older students. This finding is similar to what Kim (1995) uncovered in her research into Korean ESL learners request strategies. In this study, high intermediate to advanced level Korean ESL students' requests to children were found to be overly direct in comparison to the American norm. Kim attributes this to the negative transfer Korean rules of pragmatics, which place a great deal of emphasis on age differences (1995: 79). In the case of disagreement, what appears to the native English speaker to be excessively direct and impolite behavior, may in fact be due to some degree of pragmatic transfer from Korean of what Song (1994: 4078) termed "formulaic bald on record oppositional expressions." Unfamiliar with American norms, the students may equate English direct expressions of disagreement with their formulaic Korean equivalents.

Conclusions

I will conclude by examining the answers to the two research questions put forth at the beginning of this paper. First, I was concerned with the strategies and patterns of politeness that could be found among this group of high beginning level Korean ESL students. A preference for negative politeness strategies to be used regardless of whether the act threatened the positive or the negative face of the addressee was found and attributed to the probable transfer of the Korean pragmatic preference for negative politeness strategies that allow for reservedness (Hwang 1990).

Also as a part of this initial research question, I had hypothesized that status, and age as an important factor contributing to status among Koreans, would play an important role in determining politeness strategies. This hypothesis was borne out in the data, with students demonstrating increased use of politeness strategies when addressing a person they perceived to be of higher status, for example the teacher or an older fellow student. The excessively forceful, bald on record expressions of disagreement that occurred mainly when older students addressed younger students were also attributed to transfer, possibly of the formulaic direct expressions of disagreement that can be used in Korean (Song 1994). The relative lack of disagreement that was directed by the students to the teacher was also considered to be a politeness strategy. Either Brown and Levinson's (1987) "avoid disagreement" and/or "seek agreement" positive politeness strategies may have been used by the students, or perhaps the strategy of silence (Song 1994).

Taken together, the discussion in the preceding paragraphs also proposes an answer to the other research question that was posed as to why, compared to their performance of the face-threatening acts of requesting and of giving advice/suggestions, the learners' expressions of disagreement were so forceful, unmitigated, and even aggravating in the American perception. First, most of the expressions of disagreement occurred between students, and most of these were initiated by older students. These students, when addressing those younger than themselves, may have felt free to use direct expressions that, in Korean, are formulaic and considered acceptable, but in English can sound impolite. As nearly all of the instances of advising/suggesting and requesting were addressed to the teacher, more polite formulas are found.

A number of limitations apparent in this study prevent any wide generalizations, but provide the groundwork for future research. First, the number of learners involved is small, resulting in a small corpus of data. This has prevented any examination of, for example, male and female differences in politeness strategies. Also, with a small sample of learners it is impossible to be certain as to whether the patterns of strategies found were due to linguistic and pragmatic factors, or were simply particular to this group of learners and the interaction of this constellation of personalities. Finally, future studies would benefit from an insider's knowledge of Korean pragmatics. Obtaining Korean native speakers judgments of learners' utterances will help to determine specific areas where transfer may be occurring and provide reasons for transfer.

Still, some implications for classroom instruction and research can be drawn. First, although the focus of this paper has been mainly on disagreement, a point must be made regarding the appropriateness of the students' advice/suggestions and requests. As discussed above, most of the students' requests and suggestions were linguistically well-formed, and it was put forth for speculation that this may have been due to instruction, particularly in modal use. Often students are instructed that one form of, say, a question, is more or less polite than another. While this is important information, ESL students must also be given the culturally specific information as to what constitutes a more or less formal situation. For example, many of the students in this study employed "You should X" in a grammatically correct manner when giving advice. As Banerjee and Carrell (1988: 335) point out, this is a form that may be perfectly acceptable between friends, but could seem impolite if used with a person of higher status. While I never perceived rudeness in any of these cases, it is possible that another might. If we are to teach our students that one request is more polite than another, or that "should" is used to give advice, we must have research that tells us how these forms are perceived by native speakers and in what situations or under what conditions they are appropriate.

Concerning expressions of disagreement, this study, along with Kim's (1995) study of Korean ESL learner's requests, points to some pedagogic

concerns which may be specific to Korean learners. By transferring Korean pragmatic norms to English, Korean ESL students may tend to be perceived as rude and overly direct when addressing people they perceive to be of lower status, which includes those who are even slightly younger. It is important for all students that teachers point out the different variables that make up the American concept of status, and for Korean students in particular to note the lack of emphasis on age. Early instruction in this concept could prevent social blunders and embarrassment for the students.

Finally, the insights afforded by this study can serve as a basis for further research into ESL learners pragmatic development. Comparisons can be made with the pragmatic performance of intermediate and advanced Korean ESL learners, and with that of beginning ESL learners of various language backgrounds and cultures in hopes of gaining knowledge into the process of developing pragmatic competence in a second language.

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Appendix

Requests

1-8-97
The teacher has just told the class that she wants to videotape the class the following week and asks if that is OK. B. makes a joking request.

B: Could you prepare a mask for me? [1]
T: A mask?
S: Mask.
B: Just to (video taping gesture)
T: Oh, god! (Laughs) Are you shy? (Ss laugh)

1-20-97
The teacher is explaining abbreviations and makes an unfortunate choice of example which results in J. making a request that sidetracks class for the rest of the day (i.e.; a successful request).

T: I don't say "orange juice," I say "o.j."
Ss: o.j.? o.j. O.J. Simpson.
T: Yeah, O.J. Simpson. Because we-
J: AH! I wanna talk about O.J. Simpson. [2]

1-28-97
Two students have explained to the teacher the use of the Korean honorific suffix "-nim"used when speaking to teachers. The teacher has teasingly suggested that they refer to her in this manner to show their respect. Shortly after this the teacher is working with another group and B. calls for her, becoming progressively louder over the noise of the classroom, to make his request.

B: Nancy-nim? Nancy-nim? NANCY-NIM?
T: Yes!
B: (laughs) Can I open the window? [3]
T: Of course!

3-4-97
This request occurred after class between two students with low social distance.

J: Do you have some tissue? [4]
E: Some?
J: Tissue

3-18-97
This request occurred during the party on the last day of class between two students with medium social distance.

S: Give me one piece. [5]
T: Not even please! Not even please, G. You shouldn't give it to him! Just give me one piece, he says.
S: Not polite?
T: Well, you could say please, couldn't you?

Advice/Suggestions

1-30-97
Just after class SH approaches the teacher to point out that she has chalk dust under her eye.

SH: Nancy.
T: Yeah.
SH: Something you...something you...(XXX)...you have... (Gesturing towards under her eye.) [1]
T: What?
S: Chalk.
T: Oh, do I have chalk? Oh, thanks.

2-25-97
G. interrupts near the beginning of class to give the teacher advice on how to cure her hoarse voice.

T: Well, you guys, listen d-
G: I think you- you should relax your voice. [2]

2-25-97

The teacher has been trying to find out where several of the absent students are. She has had a short exchange with another student concerning her throat, which is hoarse this day, and then tries to again find out about missing students, but the students, particularly G., are not finished giving advice.

T: Well do you guys know about S. and H. and B. and D. and A.? Are they here today?
G: I think a better way is, uh, is- xxx stop and very stop and- [3]
Ss: (laughing because he's still fixated on the throat advice and he's the one who can tell T. about the other students)
T: It's ok, it's ok, don't worry, don't worry.

2-25-97

At the end of class the students continued to give advice for the teacher's hoarse throat.

H: In- in our country if I hurt my- my egg er throat
T: yeah
H: they- they say to me "you should eat some egg without cook" [4]
T: Ew! Raw egg?

2-25-97

B. has been joking about the teacher's squeamish response to the suggestion that she eat raw egg for her throat. After jokingly disagreeing with her reaction (see disagreement #8), he advises her to try it.

T: I'm not gonna eat raw egg. I will not eat raw egg.
B: You'd better eat that! [5]

3-18-97

B. makes a career suggestion for the teacher during the party on the last day of class.

B: If you have to- if you have to be xxx to plan to teach another country, why don't you choose Korea [6]
T: Yeah, maybe. You never know.

Disagreement

1-18-97

Students are practicing "too +adjective" and the teacher has given the example of a lady who is 98 and too old to drive.

T: She's too old to drive, right?
H: But I know one woman, her age is 90, she drives. [1]

1-28-97

Students had been in groups discussing schools in their respective countries. The class had just come together to share what they had learned and E., an Italian, has put forth the idea that Korean teachers usually wield a lot of authority in the classroom.

T: Ooooh, th- the Korean teachers have a lot of authority. Usually.
E: Usually.
T: Not always.
S: NO! (Cough) I was teaching college, and I just...(goes on to relate his experience) [2]

2-25-97

The teacher, who is hoarse this day, has been trying to find out where several of the students are. She has had a short exchange with another student concerning her hoarse throat and then tries to again find out about missing students, but the students, particularly G., are not finished giving advice. G. and E. disagree as to the best method of cure.

T: Well do you guys know about S. and H. and B. and D. and A.? Are they here today?
G: I think a better way is, uh, is- xxx stop and very stop and- [3]
Ss: (laughing because he's still fixated on the throat advice and he's the one who can tell T. about the other students)
T: It's ok, it's ok, don't worry, don't worry.
E: No, no, no! Better is drink um...hot milk with honey and and and uh best is with honey honey and whiskey.
G: Honey is not good. [4]
T: And whiskey? All right, I'll take it!
G: Honey is not good. [5]

T: How about honey and lemon? Honey is good, honey helps.
G: No, no, no. Honey, if you uh drink honey yeah if it uh if you eat honey you more the [6]
E: liquid
G: No, uh.... (starts looking in dictionary)

(3 more exchanges with other students, one tries to explain that G. would know where the missing students are)

2-25-97

The lesson is about "too many/much" and a Korean student gives the example that there are too many Korean students in the class. The teacher agrees and a short exchange follows about the difficulties in making groups of students from different language backgrounds. B. disagrees with the notion of "too many Korean students" with a sly joke.

B: But "too" I learned "too" I learned you from you "too" means so bad [7]
(Unidentified male student laughs)
T: Oh, yes, that "too" means bad.
B: You said "too many Koreans here..."

(T. Goes into an explanation intended to reassure - that the makeup of the class is difficult, not the students themselves and gets a sly look and laugh from the student at the end of it, showing that he's giving her a hard time).

2-25-97

As the students are leaving they have been giving the teacher advice on how to cure her sore throat. One suggestion has been to eat raw egg. The teacher has reacted to this with a squeamish noise ("Ew!). B. teases her about her reaction to eating raw egg, refuting her impression.

B: IT'S NOT DISGUSTING!
T: IT IS DISGUSTING!
B: IT'S NOT DISGUSTING! [8]
T: IT IS DISGUSTING!
B: IT'S NOT DISGUSTING!
T: I'm not gonna eat raw egg. I will not eat raw egg.
B: You'd better eat that!
T: NO!
B: (laughs)

3-6-97

The students have been discussing how the lives of women have changed. J. and S. are in disagreement as to how much leisure women have. There is low social distance between the two students.

S: Uh I thinks today is very different, woman's life for example- housewife and uh about two- twenty uh twenty years ago woman, her- hers life is very hard and uh today's woman wake up and enjoy uh swimming and and and soccer ((ss laugh)) and and- Huh? Uh, why? Why- why you laughing?
A: Enjoy work out, no?
S: Yes, yes, yeah.
J: Just- just- excuse me, just um her husband um many money uh much money. [9]
S: NO! I think almost uh womans- [10]
J: Almost?
S: Yes. Xxx aerobic dancing and shopping.
J: No. I don't think so. [11]

3-6-97

G., who has never been to Italy but has a friend living there, disagrees with the assertion of E., (an Italian woman), that men in Italy are very rude to women. There is a medium level of social distance between the two students and E. does not like G.

E: Yeah, yeah, my mother was uuum ( ) sometimes I see two couple like my mother my father um the man is very rude sometimes.
G: Rude? Very very RUDE? Very RUDE? [12]
E: Yeah, rude.
G: Oh my God not rude. [13]
E: Yeah, rude I think-
G: I think man is very polite. [14]
E: No.

3-18-97

This exchange occurred during a class party on the last day of class. S. and B. disagree as to the name of their teacher. There is very low social distance between the two.

S: This term my teacher is-
B: Mike
S: John John [15]
T: You're taking pronunciation AGAIN?
S: Yes.
B: MIKE! [16]
S: Who?
T: Mike or John?
S: John! He's John.

3-18-97

This disagreement occurred during the party on the last day of class. B. has put a chicken wing in the ranch dip and H. does not think this is the correct use of the dip. There is very low social distance between the two students.

H: It's for celery.
T: Dip, what?
H: For celery.
T: Is it? (Simultaneously) B: NO! [17]

3-18-97

The students are have been saying that the teacher is not tall. When the teacher disagrees, she is refuted.

T: I'm tall.
S: You're not tall. [18]